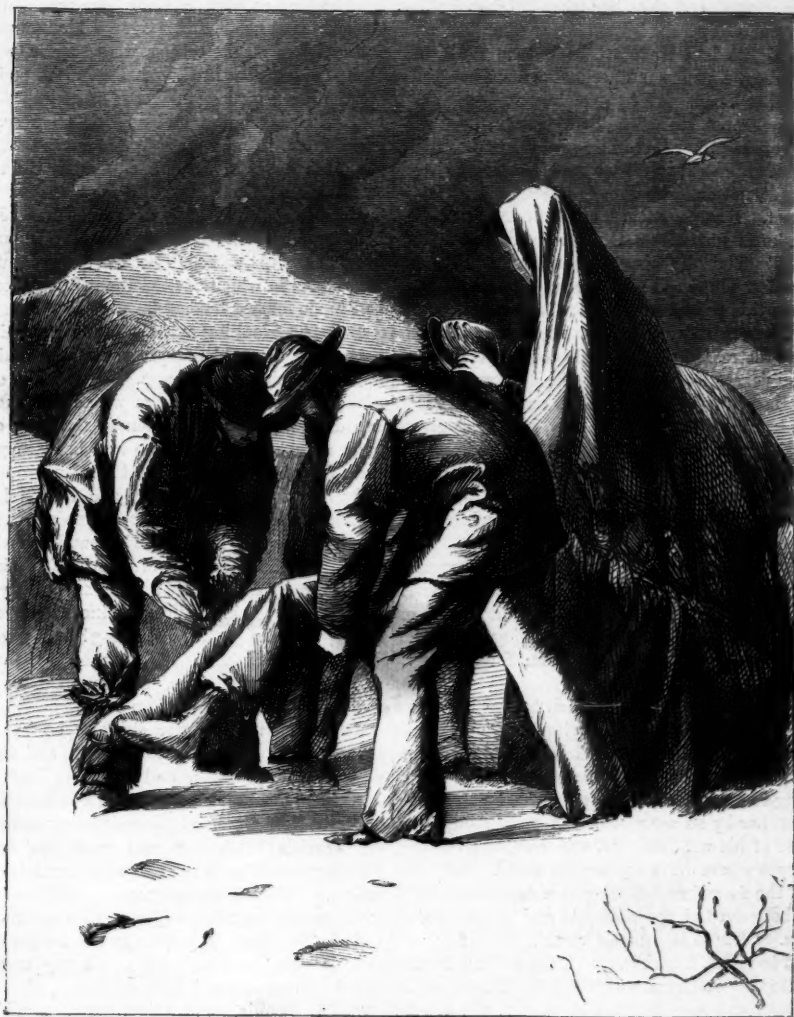


THE QUIVER

—SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1866.—



Drawn by C. J. STANILAND.

"Her husband, her own dear Dennis!"—p. 83.

"ALL RIGHT AT LAST."

I.

"MY dear," said Captain Smith, of H.M. revenue cutter *Dauntless*, to his wife, looking up from the damp sheet of the *Times*, that lay on

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the breakfast table beside his well-filled plate, "here it is again."

Pretty, daintily-attired Mrs. Smith, for she was still a comely woman, though her hair was thickly

streaked with grey, rose from her seat behind the massive urn at the opposite end of the table, and leaned over her husband's broad shoulder, her eyes following his finger, as he pointed to the few words so strangely interesting to them both.

"God grant that it may be successful this time," she murmured, and then her tears fell fast, for the memory of a day gone by was heavy upon her, and her thoughts had travelled back to a darkened room, where a young mother had pressed her first-born to her heart. Ah! the changes since.

"Come, come, Rosa," said the captain, "you will make yourself ill. A terrible trial it has been for us, but I almost thought we had learned to say, 'Thy will, not ours, be done.' Darling, it is best—it is best. Dry your tears, and let our trust be in Him who is not only a God at hand, but a God afar off." Then he kissed her very tenderly, for the shadow of the sad past was on him also.

When this petted son was about fourteen years of age, he ran away from home and went to sea, and the distressed parents had heard no tidings of him for years. They thought the pictures of sea-fights hanging in their library, and paintings of grand tempests on the old ocean, had first given their child a liking for the sea. This had been the great sorrow of their life, but they never spoke of it to one another, unless it was called forth by some little circumstance, such as that which had occurred this morning.

Since the captain had belonged to the revenue service, his home had been at different sea-coast villages, and now he was in the neighbourhood of Estleigh, a narrow line of town running along the shore, and about thirty miles from Burton Gray, where their son was born.

Poor Mrs. Smith! this allusion to her long-lost child quite upset her, and burying her face on her husband's breast, she choked back her sobs, for she knew it distressed him to see her weep. Then, seeking to draw her from her sorrow, he strove to interest her by an account of the smuggling that, in spite of his watchfulness, was carried on at the very spot where he was now stationed. He told her of the fierce encounters which sometimes took place between the revenue men and these lawless beings. "There is a small vessel," he said, "expected to-night, from France. They will try to run her into Gavie's Creek with the tide. The night is moonless, and they think Old Starry, the coast-guard, will soon be overpowered; but I fancy we shall teach them another story. Some of the villains will find themselves elsewhere than drinking over their ill-gotten gains to-night: but we shall have a tussle for it. Well, I must be off, and see if I can get more information as to their whereabouts. Good-bye, Rosa, keep up a good heart;" and with another kiss he left her. And all through that day Mrs. Smith sat with the book

open on her knee, fearing and praying for the rough old captain, and letting her thoughts dwell on that past that seemed more than ever present with her.

II.

VERY inviting looked the snug room of Denis Smith's tiny cottage; a bright fire crackled in the old-fashioned grate, and quivered along the floor, and flickered on the ceiling, wrapping in gold the pots of evergreens in the small window, and causing the brass birdcage, whose tenant was chirping to the blaze, to glow and sparkle all over. Nor was this all. That bounding flame was flashing on the glass doors of Jessie's cupboard, till the old china stored there sparkled and looked young again. It rested lovingly for a moment on Jessie's brown-golden hair; it lit up the broad, sunburnt brow of Dennis, as he lay back in the great wooden easy chair, in which nestled the soft cushions she had made for her husband.

Dennis sat looking at the wife of six months with that gloomy, troubled expression of face which had lately made her so unhappy. In vain she chatted nicely of the little nothings which had made up her day: how the black hen was sitting on her eggs at last; how busy she had been in putting their little house to rights; what a famous stew she had prepared for his supper, and how Neighbour Jenkins had admired the handsome shawl he had given her, saying it was real lace, and marvellously good. At this last piece of information his brow clouded more deeply, and he said, snappishly, "Just like all you women. What business had you gossiping with the prying old thing? and what does she know about lace? If it is real, the man must have sold it in a mistake," and then Dennis looked more gloomy and sulky than ever.

Jessie said nothing, for she saw he was out of temper; she prepared the supper, and he came sullenly to the table, and sat there leaning his handsome head on his hand, and looking strangely different from the bright Dennis he sometimes was. All Jessie's brightness was gone too, and the choking sensation in her throat prevented her from eating. "Dennis was so queer sometimes."

When the semblance of a meal was concluded, and Jessie began to put away the supper-things, Dennis rose, and said, "Where's my comforter, Jess? I'm going out."

"But, Dennis," she cried, putting aside the window-curtains, "it begins to snow; don't go out to-night."

"I've business to do," he answered; "and when a fellow's got anything on hand, he can't sit staring at the fire. I shall be back in an hour or two; don't wait up for me;" and, without another word, he was gone.

And Jessie stood at the door shivering and watching him across the lonely common, which

lay between the cottage and the town. Then she came in and cried very bitterly, as she wondered what had come over Denis, and why he was so much away at night now, and she knelt in the light of that quivering fire, and prayed God to shield him from harm, and lead him in the right way; and the dancing flame brightened over her like a glory, and she rose from her knees calmer and stronger. Jessie had been piously brought up, and now the sound of the leaping blaze seemed to form itself into words, and say: "Be strong, and of good courage; fear not, for I am with thee!"

A corner of the black lace shawl, hanging from the drawer, attracted her attention, and as she went to lay it smoothly, she could not resist looking over the pretty things Dennis had given her lately, "but which he did not like her often to wear," he said. As soon as she had duly admired and replaced all her treasures, she seated herself in the great chair her husband had vacated, and soon was sleeping the sweet sleep of a child.

She slept calmly and soundly. On through the night the village clock ran out the hours unheeded, as she lay wrapped in her soft and girl-like slumber; and when she awoke, the cold, dull December morning was seven hours old.

Jessie started to her feet; something was wrong. Ah, yes! she remembered now. Dennis, her beloved, had not returned. Then came the sickening chill, the sinking of heart that one feels on waking to sorrowful life again. In a little while the cold, grey light began to shadow forth the objects in the room. The fire had long since gone out, the ground was covered with snow, and a fog hung in the air. "I must find him," she said to herself. "I will go and ask mother what to do," but her thoughts were confused, and she could not form any determinate purpose. She hastily wrapped around her a thick shawl, and locking the street-door behind her, set forth to cross the common. Very dreary it looked—snow everywhere, and the town shut out by the fog. What wonder that Jessie lost her way? She grew sadly frightened, and then she paused, and hearing voices, endeavoured to make her way towards them. She soon found herself at the extreme edge of the common, the rushing, foaming sea was beneath her, and looking down the steep cliff she dimly discerned men fighting. Poor Jessie! her heart stood still with fear; she seemed riveted to the spot.

At length the strife ceased, and the morning sunshine breaking through the fog, Jessie could see the town and the wrong direction she had taken. As she turned to leave the spot, a groan fell upon her ear; once and again she heard it, and looking intently down the cliff she espied a human figure, almost concealed by the bushes that covered the steep, lying about halfway down the declivity.

One instant Jessie paused to take counsel with herself, and prayed for help; then she bravely started for the town to try and get some one to assist her. To some sailors loitering about, and to some workmen going forth to their daily toil, she told her tale, and descending the cliff with much difficulty, they brought up the man, who was bleeding copiously from the side. It was her husband, her own dear Dennis!

Now the secret of those dark looks flashed on Jessie. Her husband had been one in the strife between the men of the *Dauntless* and the smugglers. Now she knew how it was she had those sparkling brooches and glossy silks. Very bitterly had she arrived at the knowledge of the truth; but she kept her discovery to herself, and the men thought he had fallen from the cliff.

One of them took off his great coat, and made of it a sort of hammock, in which they placed the wounded man, and so they went on; his wife kept close to his side—at least, as near as she could, just outside the man who was carrying the hammock, and in this way they proceeded to the cottage. No fire was sparkling there now; but, dull and cold as it was, Jessie was glad to lay him on his own bed, and to hear him breathe a deep sigh.

"He lives! he lives!" she exclaimed. "Oh, my husband!" The doctor told her she must keep very calm, for that her husband was dangerously wounded. A severe illness came on, during which patient Jessie was his only nurse.

But revenue officers are not easily satisfied; they are impracticable sort of people, and no sooner did Captain Smith, of the *Dauntless*, hear that a sailor was ill at the lower end of the town, than he thought it would be no harm to try and get a sight of him. It was just possible it was some fellow who had been wounded in the fray by Gavie's Creek. These old captains are shrewd and sharp, and the instinct was not wrong which led him to Jessie's door. The poor thing was frightened to death at the idea of the captain of the revenue cutter, *Dauntless*, being within her doors, but she could not help herself. She told me afterwards she was as if struck senseless, and she let him walk up-stairs into her husband's chamber, without one word of remonstrance or prohibition. The captain's manner was so quiet, and his voice so gentle, that he did not wake the sick man, who was sleeping.

What was it that brought that look into the old man's eyes, and made his lips quiver, as he watched the sleeper? There was the short upper lip, and the well-formed Roman nose, most singularly resembling the wayward boy he had lost so long ago; and with that sleep so tranquil, the innocent expression of boyhood had come back on Dennis's face.

As Captain Smith watched him gently breath-

ing, he altogether forgot the purpose for which he came; but when the sick man moved, and turned, and woke, the likeness seemed to melt away, and he remembered the object of his visit.

"I am not going to commit myself, captain," Dennis said, somewhat archly, and there was that in his voice which sent the blood rushing to the old man's heart.

Now, indeed, he made inquiries, without any purpose of discovering the young man's share in the fray. Who was he? How long was it since he had left home? A hundred persons might be called Smith, but what was his Christian name? "Dennis!" then there was no longer a doubt—the lost one was found, and father and son were soon clasped in each other's arms.

Jessie had been standing at the door all this time, and when Captain Smith said, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found," she thought he had lost his senses,

and fell to sobbing and crying from sheer terror.

The meeting between the mother and that long-lost child is too sacred for many words. It was a joy which found its sweetest expression in tears.

Dennis was very repentant. His father got him an appointment in the Customs, and he prospered more by his industry and patient work than he had ever done by his sin.

As for Jessie, she grew, through this re-union, better and happier than ever, and wiser, too. She could never be persuaded to wear any of her fine things again; and when she was in a handsome house with gilded lamps and flaring gas, she retained her modest simplicity of character, and loved her husband not one whit better than when he sat in the old wooden chair, whose cushions she had wrought for him in the little room, lighted by the quivering flame that sparkled on her gold-brown hair.

CHRIST AND THE YOUNG RULER.

BY THE REV. F. C. WILLS, B.A.



WHEN Christ was making his last progress to Jerusalem, and apparently as he was setting out on a day's journey, a young ruler of the Jews approached him, breathless; and kneeling in the dusty way on which our Lord had just gone forth, he thus addressed him:—"Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" This was akin to those impracticable questions on which the Jews exercised their ingenuity, a specimen of which we have in the demand of the lawyer: "Which is the great commandment?" The lawyer, however, after his kind, was tempting or trying; the doctors made their inquiries with philosophical aimlessness: but the young ruler was, it appears on the face of it, intensely in earnest. It was not that he desired to be commended for his virtues, and submitted them for the stamp of the Good Master's approval; the breathless haste of his approach, the precipitation with which he flung himself in the dust, show an anxious and even agitated condition of mind. He probably felt as most spiritually-minded Jews must have felt—a want of something more than they possessed—a scepticism as to the blood of bulls and of goats—a desire for substance after so many ages of types and shadows, ever pointing to something which never appeared. The observance of the law brought with it temporal benefits, even as natural consequences: but the condition on which eternal life was to be conferred was not stated by the first dispensation. The commandments were "with promise," but the pro-

mise was temporal: it might or might not draw after it eternal life. But if it did, why not have put forward prominently what would have been so much greater an inducement to the keeping of the commandment? This consideration must have more or less disquieted the minds of thoughtful Jews. Our Lord was just about to pass for ever from the eyes of this young ruler, for he was going up to die at the feast: the true paschal Lamb was on the way to be sacrificed. How this last, and perhaps first, glimpse of Christ must have read long afterwards in the life of the ruler: long after he had lost the enthusiasm of his youth!

This narrative to the end of the chapter is found in the same connection in St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels. But St. Mark, who received his from the dictation of St. Peter, narrates with more energy and life-effect than the two other evangelists. It is he who tells us that the young man came running, and that he kneeled to Jesus. We perceive in both actions an impetuous character, full of good impulses, but, as the conclusion shows, without stability. Exposed to all the temptations that are thrown in the way of the rich, he was a man of blameless life. His sympathies were all with what was exalted and good; for, in his admiration of Jesus, blended perhaps with feverish anxiety for an answer, he knelt in the way. He was one of those thoroughly lovable and noble characters which are often to be met with in the world, not under the influence of religion. Though Jesus saw that he was bound down to earth, his

attention was caught by the young man's simplicity and enthusiasm; "and Jesus beholding, loved him." We recognise in this, that outside the range of Christ's discipleship all are not equally excluded from his regards. To suppose that the whole outer world is on a dead level, the most noble and the most detestable being both alike hateful, is, at all events, to take our view from the standing-point of the latter. Nor is it reconcilable with the case of this young ruler, so soiless and earnest, whom Jesus loved, though he, humanly speaking, failed to save. The innate beauty of his nature caught the Saviour's eye, and, in a moment, fixed his love; and we almost wonder that he let him go—that he demanded so great a sacrifice at once, and did not win him by degrees. But we must learn of Christ; and perhaps the best chance with an excitable and unstable character is to demand whatever sacrifice may be required all at once. It is thus carried over the bar of a sudden, when the feelings are at their height, and, on returning to a calmer state, finds itself committed to a course, and the main difficulties removed. No doubt our Lord did for the best; but though he loved the young ruler, he left him to the unfettered exercise of his own free will. We see before us the mystery of human free will, as he goes away grieving—loved, but lost.

The young man's first question involved a vital mistake. "Good Master." "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but God." So the questioned throws out a difficulty, and leaves it to work in the mind of his questioner. In asserting that none was good but God, he gives him the choice of recognising his Godhead or denying his goodness—goodness to which he was in the act of paying homage by kneeling in the dust, and referring with such earnestness this great and difficult question. The young man could not solve this mystery at once. Next time he calls him simply "Master."

But observe how much in character was the ruler's question, "What good thing shall I do?" He had no idea of a life of unostentatious piety, in which each day should have its task, and every added year its progress made and its ground gained.

"What good thing shall I do?" It was an impatient question. "By what single achievement can I win heaven? by what strong effort can I procure all at once and for ever the inheritance of eternal life?" But Christ does not answer, "Thou hast nothing to do; all is done for thee; thou hast but to believe that it is so." Not so. He does not show him something instead of that eternal law, obedience to which has failed to satisfy his conscience. He adds to, or rather completes, what the ruler had. He comes not destroying the law, but fulfilling it. He puts to it that which it had

wanted; he adds sacrifice to obedience—"sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven;" then take up the cross, and follow me, and I will complete the work.

To his impatient question Christ replies, "Thou knowest the commandments." The young man answers, with great simplicity, "All these have I observed from my youth." Is not Christ wrathful at the presumption and self-righteousness manifested in these words? On the contrary; it was at this moment that, "beholding"—fixing on him an attentive gaze, we are told that "Jesus loved him." Christ's attention was caught by such a claim; and his gaze penetrated like a two-edged sword into the thoughts and intents of the young ruler's heart. There he saw a verification of his high pretensions as far as it was possible in one yet human. He saw in the depths of that nature, every recess of which his Divine perception searched like a consuming fire, no wilful sin. He saw a vivid conscience, a highly religious type of character, an ardent desire to do what was right; and in that deep gaze, Jesus conceived for him a warm human affection, such as he felt for Lazarus and Mary, and pre-eminently for St. John. But one weak point he espied in that "honest and true heart." "If thou wouldest be entire," not free from the all-prevailing infirmity of human nature, but "freed from thy besetting fault, which is being taken up with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches—go, add positive virtues to negative: sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

Here he takes him at his word; the young man had asked, "What good thing shall I do?" He offers such a good thing—such a single great effort with which to commence his religious life. He sees that he is bound down to his possessions, and he offers him that which will be both a remedy for his worldliness and a test of his sincerity.

This is, in truth, the very marrow of the circumstance, that to abandon the besetting sin is the first step in the strait road of life. In St. Mark's Gospel the words are suggestive of this: "But one thing thou lackest." Such is, in truth, the lesson of the story. "One thing"—alas! that one thing should suffice to bar the way to eternal life and cut us off from Christ's discipleship! Yet so it often is—but "one thing" obstructs and turns aside our whole life. Never far from the kingdom of God; never reaching it. We barter heaven for this "one thing." It leavens everything—brings everything into subjection to itself, and is the despot of our faculties and affections. Often running to Christ and kneeling to him in the way, we still find this "one thing" between us and him: and as often we turn away grieved—for that we are rich, or high in place, or given to some sinful indulgence. Perhaps we scarcely know what im-

parts this worldly turn to our thoughts, and what makes religious reflections distasteful—what constitutes the charm of one and alienates our inclinations from the other. We will not confess to ourselves that it is this "one thing" which gives its colour to everything else, and throws its grey shadow over our whole lives. But to conquer this "one thing" is to conquer all; to spare it is to be all conquered. We reason thus with ourselves, that perfection is a wild dream. We cannot pretend to cleanse every corner of our hearts; it is not much to tolerate "one thing" or to "lack one thing." But this little remnant of the Canaanites will be a thorn in our side; it will invite other enemies to the frontier and give them help from within. It will corrupt all the other inhabitants of the heart, and turn them away from serving the living God. Do not, then, allow the enemy quiet possession of a single stronghold. Sins will never cease, save with the beating of the heart; but what destroys the soul is the sin permitted—the idol in the temple of God; whatever may be its nature, the one thing that we lack or the one thing that we connive at. Such is the lesson we derive from the story of this young ruler, or rather "courtier." He could give up all else: but one thing was lacking, and for this all his other good qualities were lost—at least, in so far as we can see or hear of him; he has left no identifiable footmarks in the holy writings.

The story, going no further than it does, is the saddest in the Bible. Nothing remains of his after-history; there is nothing reliable to enable us to identify him with any one afterwards mentioned, or conjecture what was his end. Did he return to his possessions, and try to enjoy them as before, in his old self-righteous days, ere he knew harm in the love of riches? Did he find, being so noble a nature as he evidently was, that all their charm was gone, and all their glitter faded? Did he remember the Master, so sad and yet Divine; that had desired his companionship? Those far-seeing eyes, that beholding him steadfastly as he knelt, and looking into his heart, had filled with love—"Jesus beholding him loved him." He was such as one would expect to meet again. Brooding on that mystery which Jesus had left unsolved, and which pointed to his Godhead, pondering on those words of solemn and tender counsel, we can hardly help thinking of him as one day coming back to seek the Master; and perhaps hearing that he had been crucified, and weeping that he had not been there to bear the cross, as he had said; crying bitterly, like Peter, for the love he had slighted. We cannot help thinking of other rich men mentioned, once and again—of Joseph of Arimathea, who dared to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. It was an act that suggests the ruthfulness and repentance of an impetuous nature. Or again, we

think of the "Son of Consolation," who having land sold it, and laid the price of it at the apostles' feet.

But, as far as the Scriptures go, nothing could be more sad. Our Lord seems to have felt it bitterly, for he turned round to the apostles, and said, with peculiar intensity—so great that they were beyond measure amazed, and he repeated it again with still more emphasis—"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" The disciples, who perhaps would have liked to have among them a young ruler, grieved at his having been thus damped and driven away by the severity of the test, exclaimed, with evident petulance, "Who then can be saved?" Our Lord had just rebuked them for offering to drive away the little children. They see ground for being displeased with him, in turn, for turning away the young ruler, so lovable and so spotless in his life. Jesus caught the tone of annoyance, and, "looking on them," answered, that to men these things might seem impossible, owing to the incapacity of their understandings: but not so to God. Who cannot understand the force of this "looking on them?" So, when waiting for his judges, he turned and looked on the denier.

Here we cannot help finding in what St. Peter answered, a comforting tone, blended with one of jealous fondness: "Lo, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have?"—comfort, suggested under the cloak of a question apparently mercenary. And our Lord's answering him with such rich promises of reward, looks as if he saw in it only the intended comfort, and not a base and mercenary claim put in at such a moment for the wages of fidelity.

In conclusion, we should search in ourselves if we have this readiness to forsake all that St. Peter claimed; or, on the other hand, with the young ruler, if "one thing is lacking." Then, at least, it is something to be conscious of an infirmity. Christ guides and helps all; but some he draws along with resistless force, where they had not ventured themselves to go. He can take from you what you have not strength to resign, and lay on your trembling shoulders the cross which you have not courage to take up. And when all is gone that kept you from Christ—when the sacrifice has been made, though it be a broken heart—when the cross has been duly carried, and your affections have been mortified, and you have died to sin, then you shall be alive indeed to Christ. The world shall have passed away, and you shall lie in his arms—like one who passes through some burning sickness, and rises from it with every evil humour purged, and a new future opening before him; and as you enter on this new life, a voice shall seem to say, "From henceforth he is mine; even as I, Father, am thine."

BALLADS COMMEMORATIVE OF CHRISTIAN HEROISM.—I.

ST. COLUMB OF IONA.

A LAY OF THE CULDEES. BY S. J. STONE, B.A., AUTHOR OF "LYRA FIDELIUM."

PREFATORY REMARKS.—For most of the facts in connection with the history of St. Columba (or Colum, as his name was before it was Latinised) we are indebted to the accounts of Cumin and Adamnan, who were both his successors as Abbots of Iona. He was descended on his father's side from the great Niell, King of Ireland; and on his mother's from Lorn, a Scottish prince. O'Donnellus tells us that he not only divested himself of his possessions, but resigned his succession to a crown. He was born A.D. 521, became a pupil of the celebrated St. Ciaran, and after founding churches and monasteries in Ireland, and also distinguishing himself in several foreign countries by his learning and piety, he determined to attempt the evangelisation of the western and northern parts of Scotland. He chose Iona, one of the western isles, then occupied by the Druids, as his starting-point, and arrived there A.D. 564 with twelve followers, learned and devoted men. His unwearied zeal, sagacity, and prudence, as well as his piety—for he was remarkable both in respect of natural and spiritual gifts—made him successful in every point of view. He overthrew Druidism, won over the rude inhabitants, conciliated the fierce Pictish king; then went himself and sent disciples to found churches among all the heathen tribes of the north; was sought out for counsel by chieftains and princes on all sides; was the great encourager of learning and of the study of the Scriptures, and made his monastery in Iona a seminary to which students repaired from all points, and whence they went forth among the Pictish, Celtic, and Saxon tribes to diffuse "the benefits of knowledge and blessings of religion."

He died on Sunday, July 27, A.D. 596, in the thirty-fifth year of his abbottship, and the seventy-seventh of his age.

Some interesting circumstances in connection with his death are dealt with at the close of the following ballad, which is supposed to be a Lay of the Culdees (*Celle De*, Servants of God), who formed "the sainted family of Iona," of which St. Columba was the father—the ancient British clergy, who ought, with their founder, to be "held in everlasting remembrance," as the first illuminators of the dark ages of the north—to whom we are indebted to an extent which it is scarcely possible to overstate.

I.

IONA'S hills are lowly,
Her rocks are bleak and wild,
The motherland beside her
Frowns on her parted child;
No forests make her stately,
No rivers make her fair,
She lieth still o'er vale and hill,
As if in meek despair.

II.

Yet the Lord God Almighty
Hath loved the lonely isle:
His word abideth surely,
The wilderness shall smile,
And on these bleak rocks, beautiful
Shall be their feet who stand—
The heralds of the Lord of Love
Who died in Holy Land.

III.

But long years—half a thousand—
Have fled in weary line,
And nought hath waked the silence,
And none have seen a sign;
And still by feet unholy
Valley and hill are trod,
And priests in shapeless temples
Worship an unknown God.

IV.

And still the winds that sweep her
Ever are sad in tone,
And still the waves around her
Make ever wail and moan;
For, from the chosen island,
In tempest or in calm,
Rolls on the air nor praise nor prayer,
In litany or psalm.

V.

But now! the burden changeth,
Though none the change may know,
Save those who joy in heaven
For blessing wrought below.
The mournful burden changeth,
Like weeping into song;
Like those who cry, "He cometh!"
Who wailed before, "How long?"

VI.

'Tis on a silent even,
After the glare of day,
A frail boat to Iona
Is wending peaceful way;
A glow is on the waters,
A charm is in the air,
And the blessing Pentecostal
Seems falling everywhere.

VII.

Long was the weary waiting,
The desolate day was long,
But peace has come at sunset,
Like praise at even song!
Cometh Iona's promise,
In that frail boat on the sea,
As of old the Hope of a world forlorn,
The future church and her Lord was borne
On the waves of Galilee!

VIII.

A saint and his twelve companions
Are all the waters bear;
They wave no warring standard,
No battle-arms they wear.
No sword have they but the sacred Sign
Of the love unto death of a Grace divine;
But never, I ween, hath sword been seen,
Which may with that compare!

IX.

St. Columb's name is noble,
Of kingly line is he;
And rich broad lands and vassal bands
Are his in his own countree,
But homage, and wealth, and sceptre,
He layeth gladly down;
Who counts the Cross his glory,
Recks not of earthly crown!

X.

Priests of the old delusion,
Fear for your ancient reign!
A mightier than the Roman
Here cometh o'er the main:
Soon shall the golden sickle
Gleam in the oak no more;
No more the stones of the cromlech
Be red with human gore.
The charm of your day is passing,
A new strange "fire of God"
Shall wither the worn-out tokens,
The Amulet and the Rod:
There shall rise a temple stately
For every shapeless shrine,
And a sacred priestly order
Supplant the threefold line!

XI.

Of a truth be her name Iona!
Now call her Holy Isle!
Now let the winds be joyful,
Now let the waters smile!
For proud at the sacred service
They render the freight they bore,
And the saint of the great Redeemer
Stands on the sacred shore.

XII.

He calls his Twelve around him,
As a chieftain calls his clan,
For zealous deed in some sore need
Exhorting every man:
"Behold," he saith, "the darkness
Deep o'er the northern land!
And ye, the Sons of Morning,
To shine at the Lord's command!
Shine ye forth at his bidding,
Oh, new, best light of souls,
Till from the chosen kingdom
The death-shade backward rolls!

XIII.

"Far are ye from the borders
The feet of Jesus trod,
Far from the Holy City,
Far from the Hill of God:
But the Pentecostal Presence
Is brooding everywhere,
And the whole earth is Zion,
And Jesus dwelleth there!

To every wind of heaven
His standard is outfurled,
His kingdom's only limit
The kingdoms of the world!

XIV.

"Scatter the ancient shadows,
Grace of the mystic Trine!
O Human tender pity,
O love and power Divine!
Gather the northern peoples,
Gather them near and far,
To follow the herald promise
Of the Western morning star."

XV.

The saint fulfils his praying—
Whose life is as his prayer,
Shall work the work he willeth,
And safely do and dare:
The Lord God is his keeper,
And His strong angels stand
To watch and ward, to guide and guard
Ever on either hand.

XVI.

King Brudius rules Iona:
Fierce is his heart and hard,
And fast against the stranger
His castle gate is barred;
But, as the gentle sea-tide
O'erflows the rugged shore,
Ere long the saintly spirit
Winneth the proud heart o'er!

XVII.

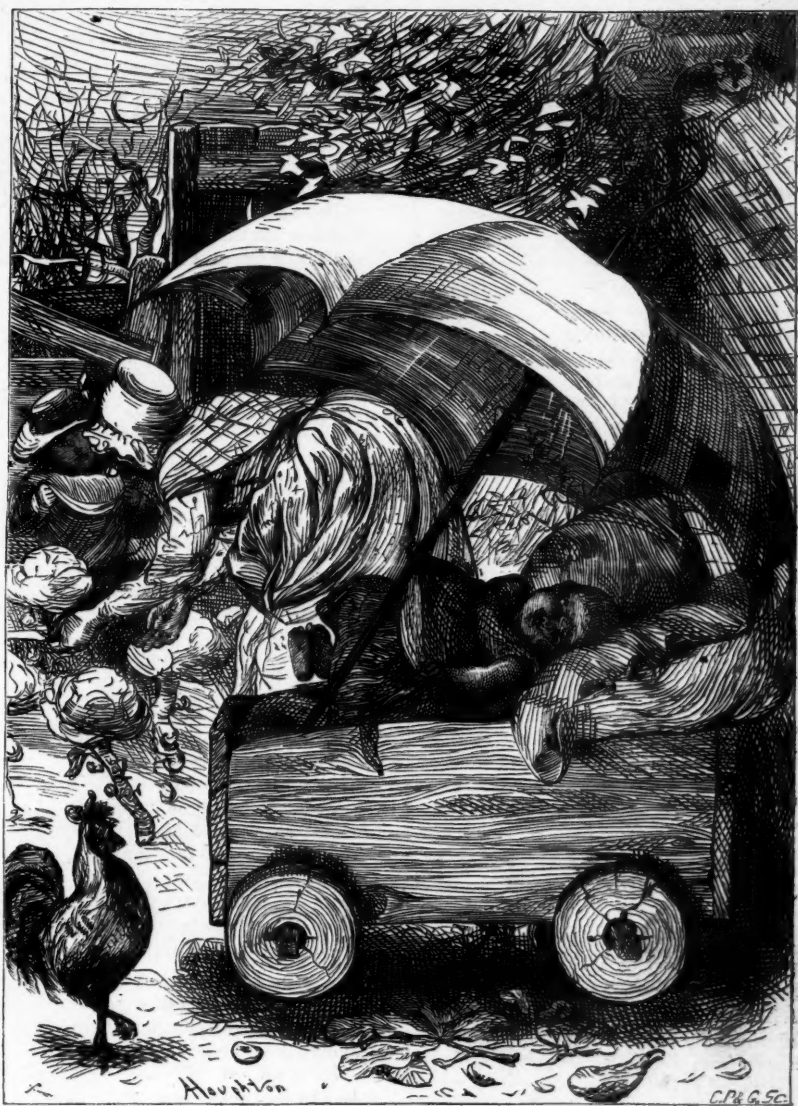
Fell is his foemen's malice,
More fell the Druid's wile;
But neither threat can daunt him,
Nor treachery beguile.
Through pain, and toil, and vigil
Ever so passeth he,
With a steadfast heart, through every one,
As of old through the fire in Babylon
Did pass the holy Three.

XVIII.

As after hours of tempest,
Or ere the day be done,
Pierces the rolling cloud-rack
The great orb of the sun;
And all the broken heaven,
And the waste world below,
Is bathed with his tender glory,
A deeper golden glow:

XIX.

So to the heathen peoples,
As after gloom of storm,
In the light of the great evangel
Stands forth St. Columb's form:
Out-pouring peace on hatred,



(Drawn by A. B. HOUGHTON.)

BABY LOO,

TO YOU.

I'm a little queen,
In my car of state;
Have you ever seen
Parasol so great?

Sissy's gay and kind,
Helping Granny, too;
Gran can always find
Things for Nan to do.

Where is pussy, pray?
How leapt she so high?
If I'm taught the way,
Could I reach the sky?

B.

And closing years of strife;
Like a visible benediction
Outbreathing a new life.

XX.

Behold, they throng around him!
Vassals, and chiefs, and kings;
From the poet-lips, that scorned him,
His fame and honour rings.
See how the wild barbarians
Kneel at his loving word,
And come, like sheep that have wandered,
Back to the Shepherd-Lord!

XXI.

Fear is in his rebuking,
Strength in his clear command,
But Love in his long forbearing,
And Blessing beneath his hand:
Tenderly loosing the burden,
Yet crushing the pride of sin,
He bringeth the fierce with the fearful,
The stern with the gentle, in!

XXII.

Conqueror, true and noble!
Not his the wasted lands,
Not his the riven banner
And reeking battle brands;
But a kingdom torn from Satan,
And the spoil of souls unpriced,
Won painfully, laid humbly,
At the feet of the Lord Christ!

XXIII.

See, high in barren places,
Springs hallowed house, or shrine—
Of unseen spirit-blessing
The visible fair sign.
And winds that breathed the story
Of human hate and wrong,
Bear now the heavenly incense
Of morn and even-song.

XXIV.

Praise to the Lord of harvest!
The waste-land is a field
Wherein the sowers' labour
A hundredfold doth yield:
Seed which the Spirit wafeth
Far on from clime to clime,
To be reaped at last by the angels,
At blessed Harvest-time.

XXV.

But he dies—the saintly Sower;
Lo, 'tis the Sabbath morn:
With joyful praise he seeth
The garnered wealth of corn.
"They shall not lack," he crieth;
"The children shall be blest,
Though the long Sabbath calleth
The father unto rest!"

XXVI.

Now, 'tis the hour of vigil—
The father in his cell
Hears on the air the call for prayer
Ring from the midnight bell.
Long ere the monks have risen
His feet have passed the door,
And at the altar lowly
He kneeleth on the floor.

XXVII.

"Where art thou, O my father?"
One crieth through the gloom:
But the darkness is as silent
As the darkness of the tomb.
With haste they bring the tapers,
With fear they gather round;
But in answer to their praying
Is neither sign nor sound.

XXVIII.

Then gently they uplift him,
And lo! a little space—
An infinite sweet rapture
Doth lighten in his face;
And well they knew he seeth
The coming great Reward!
The Glory of the blessed,
The Vision of the Lord!

XXIX.

Yet once he turneth on them
One last long look of love;
One moment, for last blessing,
Raiseth his hand above,
And then they watch him wildly,
And then they turn and weep;
The soul hath passed to Eden—
The body into sleep.

XXX.

Iona! Holy island!
Isle of St. Columb's cell!
The very names thou bearest
The Culdee loveth well,
To him thy thought is dearer
Than all earth's brightest lands,
With all their lordly mountains,
And all their golden sands.
Where'er his steps may wander
In far-off ways of toil,
In longing sweet remembrance
He treads thy sacred soil:
And when the toil is over
Fain would he fall on sleep,
Where o'er thy first great Abbot
Thine ocean breezes sweep;
So when that Angel's trumpet
Heralds the Easter-tide,
He may behold, as the mighty sound
Wakens the blessed sleepers round,
Saint Columb at his side!

DEEPDALE VICARAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN."

CHAPTER XIV.

"TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NO MAN."

IN my word, Mrs. Chauncey, this steak is done to a turn," said Reginald Chauncey, in a tone of profound admiration.

Frank heard the observation as he came in at the door of the breakfast room, the morning after his arrival at home.

At an early hour that morning, Frank, whose slumbers had been light and uneasy, had become conscious of stealthy footsteps about the house, and of the ordinary household arrangements being carried on below.

This circumstance would not have interested him in the least, had not the suspicion flashed into his mind that the said household arrangements were being performed solely by his mother.

Under this impression he rose, and cautiously stole down-stairs to the room usually occupied by the family. As he did so the sounds ceased, and as he approached nearer and nearer the door opened, and a startled face was put out to reconnoitre.

"Mother," said Frank, hastily, and in a tone of annoyance, "what are you doing?"

"My dear, I have almost finished. I am only seeing to things a little," replied she, still trembling with fright.

"Can I assist you?"

"Oh, no; and would you please speak lower, lest you should awake him;" and she made a movement indicating that in the room over head Reginald Chauncey was stretched in lordly repose.

Frank retired, not, however, to sleep. A young man under such circumstances was hardly likely to sleep.

At the present moment Reginald Chauncey, in an elaborate morning costume, his hair and his whiskers trimmed to a nicety, his ring on his finger, and his very nails in a state of perfection, sat at the head of the table. By his side was that day's *Times*, as yet unopened, and before him the steak under discussion, and all his other little Epicurean arrangements round about him. His wife in her plain print dress, her simple cap and black apron, did, it must be confessed, present somewhat of a contrast to her husband.

Frank and his father had not yet seen each other; when they did meet, their recognition was not remarkable for its cordiality.

Reginald Chauncey held out two of his smooth, white fingers.

"Ah! Frank my boy, I hope you're well. Just in time for breakfast," added he, without giving Frank time to reply.

Then, as if this reception would suffice, and he had done all that could be expected, he opened his *Times*, and became wholly absorbed in its contents.

The breakfast proceeded; Frank and his mother sus-

taining the entire conversation. Reginald Chauncey seemed as far removed from them and their subordinate interests as the Antipodes.

Frank had not as yet revealed to his mother the position in which he stood, nor his projects for the future. I should say *project*, for Frank had but one.

His early education had been to fit him for the medical profession; and, indeed, he was fitted for it now. He had carried on his studies when at Deepdale Manor, during the times and seasons that other men would have chosen for recreation. But Frank had a quiet energy that could seize upon an object, and pursue it without slackening his hand till the object was reached. Besides, he had his mother. It was to meet her urgent and pressing difficulties—to prevent, in fact, absolute ruin—that he had engaged himself as tutor to Lord Landon. The step had been taken during a crisis. There had been many such in the history of Frank Chauncey.

But now his thoughts returned to their old channel. He wished to make his way as a surgeon—then he hoped as a physician; for in whatever walk of life he was found, there he resolved to excel. It did occur to him, for he was young, and youth is sanguine—it did occur to him that the time might come when his mother would be safely sheltered by him from her many trials, when better and happier days would dawn upon them both. But at present there would be toil and struggle—labour before rest; the seed-time before the harvest. And it occurred to him, likewise, as he beheld his father's countenance, serenely apathetic to all but "last night's debate," that he would appeal in some sort to his paternal solicitude. If there were a chord in that cold and selfish bosom, he would try to strike it; for the man of the world, the diner-out, the favourite of society might, perchance, pave the way for the young novice, especially if that novice were his only son.

When breakfast was over and his mother had retired, then was Frank's opportunity.

Reginald Chauncey had finished the perusal of the *Times*. Now he offered it with a smile of infinite condescension to Frank. He had not asked Frank a single question touching his affairs. It was not his habit to do so.

"I am an indulgent father," he would say to his set. "I never interfere in any way with my son."

Frank took the paper, folded ready for his immediate benefit, but he laid it down again.

"Father," said he, endeavouring to appear at his ease, a difficult achievement, under the circumstances, "can I have a little conversation with you?"

"Certainly, my son; I shall be most happy. But you are aware that I am instantly going out," replied Reginald Chauncey.

"I have not much to say, and I will say it as quickly as I can," resumed Frank, hastily. "I wished to tell you that I have left Deepdale Manor."

"Well, my son, the world is before you. I am not one to coerce you in any way. You have but to choose a profession. I am a man of independent fortune, as you know, and tread in the footsteps of my ancestors. But if you wish to do otherwise——"

"It is no matter of *wishing*, sir," said Frank, hurriedly, "but of necessity. Not that, under any circumstances, I would be unemployed." He paused, unwilling to cast the slightest reflection on his father.

And during this pause, we may observe that Reginald Chauncey's independent fortune brought him in exactly two hundred a year. His annual expenditure was quite another matter.

"You are aware," resumed Frank, somewhat awkwardly, "that I was educated for the medical profession. It is my intention——"

"Frank, my dear son," interrupted Reginald Chauncey, in his blandest manner, "there is an old proverb, that time and tide wait for no man. I have an appointment at ten o'clock, punctually, and a little business to transact before I go. I will trouble you to hand me the inkstand."

Frank did as he was requested, and his father began immediately to write a note, an employment which so engrossed his attention that he seemed to forget Frank's very existence. When he had finished, he placed the note in an envelope, fastened it down, and, with a serene and smiling countenance, placed it on the mantelpiece.

Then he walked hastily to the window.

"Ah!" said he, cheerfully, and with alacrity; "I see the cab at the door. Good morning, my son!"

And touching Frank's hand with the tips of his well-pared nails, he quitted the room.

There was a slight confusion in the hall as he took his actual departure. There were sounds of a coat being brushed, and sundry final touches being put to his out-door toilette. But when the toilette was completed, Reginald Chauncey—got up to a state of perfection, from his glossy hat to his well-polished boots—got into the cab and drove off.

CHAPTER XV.

A CONFIDING PARENT.

FRANK turned from the window with a bitter sigh.

It was hopeless to build upon the sand—to extract sweetness from wormwood, or to pluck figs from the thorns of the desert. Equally so to find a vein of parental sympathy in the callous breast of Reginald Chauncey.

Yet sympathy is a precious boon to struggling, suffering humanity.

He sat down by the fire, and having gathered the few scattered embers together, began to look his fortune steadily in the face. Not with despondence. No; a more sanguine nature than Frank's rarely existed. Nor with discontent and repining. He had all the cheerfulness of youth, and of Christianity too: for what a great mistake it is to suppose that being a Christian means being, if not wholly miserable, at

least melancholy and low-spirited, and submitting to a despotic and unrelenting sway! To be a Christian is to have your burden cast upon One who cares for you, and fills your breast with a "larger hope" that leaves no room for doubt or despair.

Frank was, as we said before, fully resolved to become a medical practitioner. He was prepared for taking this step. Ere he had been driven to Deepdale Manor he had duly passed his examination and walked the hospitals. There would be nothing to do except get his diploma and at once enter on his profession.

Had the countess been content, Frank had remained some time longer, for he had found the solution of Phil's character and capabilities.

But, now, he would at once make for himself a position, if he could; and a name.

There was another theme connected with Frank's residence at the Manor, on which he dared not dwell.

Among the ideal scenes which his fancy chose to paint, there would ever appear the dovelike eyes, the auburn hair, the serene countenance of Lady Lucy.

He had never breathed a syllable of love, not even in its remotest stages. He was too true a gentleman—too honourable a man. But he loved her, notwithstanding, with all the zeal and fervour of his nature. Lucy only knew that she had lost a friend.

This theme, having insidiously forced its way into Frank's mind, he rose and resolved to shake it off by some more profitable employment.

But ere he had time to do so, a light footstep on the stairs announced that his mother was at hand.

If anything could cheer the forlorn destiny of Reginald Chauncey's wife, it was the prospect of passing a day with her son. She had few to sympathise with her—few that were even acquainted with her sorrows.

There are some women in whom the domestic virtues are inherent. Home is the theatre of their grandest exploits. The home circle bounds at once their hopes, their joys, their energies.

Such was the despised wife of Reginald Chauncey. Her home, alas! had proved a failure and a ruin. Still—amid the ruin, amid the decaying ashes of a world whose illusions had long ago been dispelled—the poor woman, heroic in her faith and patience, remained firm at her post. Not till the last fond wreck was gone would she abandon it.

True to the instincts of her nature, she never made the son a confidant of the wrongs practised by the husband. No; the veil was never raised from before the grim skeleton in Frank Chauncey's home. Now she had come to sit with him, bringing in her hand the work-basket with its faded silk lining, a bridal present, and intending, as heretofore, to stitch with nimble, unwearying fingers. She was wont to stitch alone. She was not a nervous woman by nature, or one apt to brood morbidly, or else she had grown hypochondriacal.

But Reginald Chauncey's wife had a solace in her woe that the world knew not of. She was a Christian woman, with a Christian's consolations and a

Christian's joys. In that lonely deserted room angels might have ministered to her. So that, though subdued and chastened, she was not despairing; though cast down, she was not destroyed.

To-day, however, was a high day for Mrs. Chauncey. She was not alone; and opposite to her was her joy and pride. Her son, born, as it were, for adversity.

But Frank's office on this especial occasion was not altogether so consoling as might be expected. He had to tell his mother of his recent dismissal. It was useless to put off the news any longer. But though Frank's prospects were not in his own estimation damaged by the freak of the Big Countess, his mother would think far otherwise. She looked upon the position of her son—"tutor to a nobleman," as she fondly observed—as one of peculiar advantage. Indeed, she began the subject this very morning by alluding to it.

"You continue to be quite happy, dear, at Lady Landon's?"

Frank did not immediately reply.

"It is such a comfort to me, Frank, to think that you are so well established, and under such patronage. Why, you will be travelling with his lordship on the Continent, by-and-by."

"Mother," interrupted Frank, smiling, "there is no knowing where your romantic tendencies may not lead you. His lordship is barely fourteen."

"Ah! but time passes very quickly, dear; and when—"

"Mother, you must not think of it," said Frank, hastily. "The fact is, I have left Deepdale Manor."

"Left!" repeated she. Her work dropped on her knee. "Left! No, Frank; you cannot mean that."

"I am sorry to say that I do, mother. At least, I am sorry for some reasons; for others I am glad."

"Glad!"

"Yes; because I mean now to set about in earnest, and make a home for myself."

Her face looked so pale and sad. There was such a trouble in her eyes, that Frank felt half inclined to anathematise the Big Countess.

"Mother," said he, soothingly, "it may all turn out for the best. I have long wished to take up a profession."

"But, my dear—"

"Besides, if you knew his lordship personally," continued Frank, smiling, "you would not build another instant upon that foundation."

And, partly to rouse her, partly in his own justification, he told her how it was the dismissal had come about. He hoped to win a smile; but no! She sighed as she took up her work; her hands trembled, so that she could hardly hold the needle. It may be that she knew more of life's shoals and quicksands, of its hard and dreary passages, than did Frank.

He began to talk cheerfully and hopefully. He sketched out his plans. His few years of struggling, it might be—he did not shrink from them. Sheer perseverance, with God's blessing, would open gradually the path to independence and prosperity. He included in this prosperity a home for his mother;

but he did not say so, for it was a tender subject; "If ever she should need it; and she surely will," said Frank to himself.

He had scarce said the words, when his eye fell upon the note his father had left upon the mantelpiece. Unwilling to frustrate any of the plans of the lordly Reginald, he took it up. "Mother," he began—then he stopped, wonder expressed on every feature. The note, or letter, or whatever else it was, was directed to himself. To himself! "Mr. Frank Chauncey." Much surprised at so unwonted a circumstance, he opened it in haste. Never to the last day of his life will Frank forget the sensation that tingled from head to foot, the unutterable horror and dismay with which he read the words—

MY DEAR FRANK,—It is fortunate that you are at home. You can take care of your mother. Ere the day is out, you will most likely receive a visit from those unpleasant members of society, the bailiffs. To show the confidence I have in your judgment, I leave all necessary arrangements in your hands. I have taken my departure.

Your affectionate parent,
REGINALD CHAUNCEY.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VICAR BROUGHT TO THE POINT.

FOR three consecutive days, Dionysius Curling went about with the letter addressed to Simon Crosskeys in his pocket. He was in a state of the utmost perplexity. To deliver it was impossible; to keep it back equally undesirable. What was to be done? He had formed his opinion on the matter; and he was a man remarkable for adherence to his own principles; in fact, his disposition inclined to obstinacy. He was convinced of the innocence of Mrs. Melrose.

Possessed with this idea, it seemed to him that he had only to put it forth in suitable language, and the Deepdale world would recant. Little did he know of Deepdale!

During these three days he kept aloof from any further interview with the widow. But, it was not therefore a sequence, that the thought of her did not run in his head continually. Yet she was a lady, and a widow. "Widows are always artful," was his favourite axiom; and "to beware of the ladies," was the point from which he started.

This woman, lying under the ban of society, accused of positive crime, was the only one of the fairer sex that had in the slightest degree interested him.

"It is the peculiarity of the case," thought Dionysius, as he vainly strove to fix his attention on his beloved "aesthetics."

And yet this peculiarity could hardly justify the unwonted train of ideas that floated through the mind of Dionysius. He closed his æsthetical volume in despair. That very moment Martha Beck presented herself at the study door.

"If you please, sir, here is Mr. Crosskeys."

Dionysius started in his chair. He was far gone in reverie already.

"Ask him to walk in, Martha."

"Please, sir, he has walked in."

And ere Dionysius could recover his scattered ideas, the redoubtable Simon Crosskeys was upon him. He stiffened into all his native angularity in an instant.

"Take a seat, Mr. Crosskeys, if you please."

"Thank ye, sir. Yes; I'll happen sit down a bit."

Simon Crosskeys had the faculty of making himself perfectly at home wherever he went. He was, however, a man of business. His time was precious. So, without any circumlocution, he burst upon Dionysius by saying—

"And now, sir, about that paper?"

Dionysius, uneasy and perplexed, glanced round the room. Once, he opened the volume that lay close beside him, as if there might be, in its well-known pages, a solution of the question. But as none was to be found, he closed it with precipitation.

Simon Crosskeys, meanwhile, spread his broad, open palms upon his knees, and leaning forward, said, in a tone of great significance—

"Mr. Curling, sir, what are you intending to do?"

Dionysius, more uneasy still, glanced round the room a second time. Then bringing his eyes to bear on Simon Crosskeys, he replied—

"I intend to do nothing at all."

"Sir?"

Simon Crosskeys had not heard that observation with sufficient correctness.

"I intend to take no step whatever," repeated Dionysius, in a firm, intelligible voice.

"No?"

And Simon Crosskeys glanced at him in a somewhat threatening, certainly a very offensive, manner.

"No," repeated Dionysius; "because it is my calm conviction that the lady is innocent."

Simon Crosskeys was still glaring. He was a burly man, with a neck of remarkable thickness. His throat was partly uncovered, and there seemed a large lump to move up and down in it.

Dionysius, having uttered what he fondly hoped would be the oracle of Deepdale, relapsed into silence.

He thought he had strangled the slander, as the infant Hercules did the snakes. But, alas, it was not so!

Bringing down his sinewy fist on the table with a force that was remarkably unpleasant to the nerves of the young vicar, Simon Crosskeys thundered forth, "And what may you mean by that, Mr. Curling?"

"I mean," said Dionysius, speaking with far less stiffness than usual, "that the proofs of Mrs. Melrose's guilt are not by any means clear to my mind. Indeed, she appears to know nothing about it."

"About what, sir?"

"The loss of the money."

"Loss! call it robbery, if you please, sir! In these parts, if we means a spade, we says a spade."

Dionysius bowed politely. He did not wish to bandy words, if he could help it, with Simon Crosskeys.

"And as to not knowing it, why she isn't likely to! That beats everything, that does!" said Simon Crosskeys, laughing derisively.

The sensibilities of Dionysius began to tingle. "Mr. Crosskeys," said he, "here is your paper. I beg you will allow me to retain my own opinion in the matter. I shall treat Mrs. Melrose with all the courtesy and attention that the widow of a brother clergyman demands at my hands."

Simon Crosskeys took the paper, still glaring in a menacing manner.

"As you please, sir. You see what the *Deepdale Gazette* says, sir."

"The *Deepdale Gazette* is a local paper, and of limited influence," began Dionysius.

But Simon Crosskeys cut him short. "The *Deepdale Gazette*, sir!" cried he, half choking with choler, "why—it's—it's the first paper going!"

Dionysius smiled. He was not the most suitable man in the world to combat the prejudices of the Deepdale population.

By this time Simon Crosskeys had reached the door. So far so good! A dim persuasion floated through the mind of Dionysius that his work was done; that, by a few words, he had altered the current of public opinion, and cast the shield of his protection round the character of Clara Melrose. Alas! soon were these pleasant dreams dispersed.

Simon Crosskeys, having arrived at the door, turned round and faced the vicar.

"If you think, Mr. Curling, to set up that woman over the heads of us Deepdale folks, you're mistaken. If you don't have her took up, sir, we shall; and that afore many days is over."

Having hurled this defiance at the head of Dionysius, Simon Crosskeys withdrew.

(To be continued.)

OF GROWING UP.

A BOY'S ADVICE TO BOYS.



SOME of you, my dear friends, will remember a few short papers, which, by the kind indulgence of the Editor, appeared in our own dear QUIVER, some twelvemonths and more ago. Well, Time has moved on a little since then, and brought us to the fag-end of eighteen sixty-six. Still, it is not unpleasant to think that we who

were boys then, are at most not very far beyond boyhood now; and that, although at our time of life a year is of some importance, the transition into man's estate is by no means sudden. If I am now sixteen, and no longer fifteen, I may be more of a man, perhaps, yet none the less a boy.

But I am aware that to some lads who read this, the thought of being still a boy will be far from pleasant.

They wish to become men all at once. They have grown tired of school, impatient of wholesome restraint. They frequently get into scrapes, but they do not like to be punished for their misdoings. "If we were men," say they, "we could not be compelled to go to school; we might please ourselves, and should have no more floggings. In fact, it's ever so much jollier to be a man!"

I cannot agree with them. They appear to forget that they would have to become pupils in a school a thousand times more severe than that of Dr. Birchall's or Professor Cramham's, where the prizes are many and great, and where the punishments are in proportion to the rewards. There is the School of Life.

Jack Highfly, an acquaintance of mine, of about my own age, lately made up his mind that he would take time by the forelock, and immediately set up for a "man." This precocious young gentleman scorned the idea of being a boy, and so cut marbles, and tops, and kites, and hoops, and prisoner's base, and all that sort of thing which we boys like so much, and absented himself, so far as he could, from our society. Not that we in the least regretted this, for he was always very "priggish," and affected a patronising manner very distasteful to us.

So Jack Highfly set up for a man, and therewith, his claim to respect as such. If we accosted him as "Jack," "Johnny," or "John," withering indeed did he intend the answering look of anger and contempt to be; "Highfly" was just endurable; but did some timid little nine-year-old greet him as "*Mister Highfly*," he was immediately the very incarnation of affability and condescension. Then to increase the impressiveness of his outward appearance, Jack had recourse to his tailor, who decked out his willing customer in the most extravagant extreme of the fashion: trousers tightly grasping the somewhat spidery legs—coat very full and extensive about the collar, and waistcoat after the same elegant cut. On his head he always wore that most dignified of hats, which the vulgar boys call "chimney-pot." In his right hand he bore a cane, which he twirled, or stuck under his arm, or, in moments of contemplation, held up to his lips, but which he never could have used in the way such things were once intended to be used, the article being little more than a foot in length. He screwed up his face into a most tortuous expression, so that he might keep up in its place (?) an eye-glass. And how sternly conscious he was of the advent of a few early sprouts on his downy chin! He simulated moments of perplexity, that he might with propriety stroke and fondle those harbingers of longed-for manhood. He also thought it desirable to become one of a set of brainless "man-boys" like himself, and that clique became at once his delight and his misery.

"Smoke, old fellow?" asked a member of this brilliant fraternity of Jack, as he opened his cigarette, and lit a "Cuba."

"No, I don't—haven't made a beginning yet," replied Jack, blushing to acknowledge what appeared to him such a shameful fact.

"No!" exclaimed the other, taking the cigar from his mouth, and with great difficulty suppressing a cough: "you don't say so!"

"My people at home are awfully particular about these things," was Jack's rueful apology.

"Well, never mind, old chap—try one now. Every man should smoke, you know."

Jack took one, and began sucking at it in a helpless sort of way, and the expression of his face was the reverse of joyful.

"Is the old boy testy?" presently asked Jack's companion.

"The old boy?" echoed Jack.

"Don't you understand?—the governor? Does he hold the reins tight?"

"Oh, the gov—my father's dead." And even the harebrained Jack was sorry he had to mention that sad fact in such a manner.

"Beg pardon; I didn't know, of course," rejoined the other. "But, then, who is so particular, as you said?"

"Well, it's my mother. She'll be awfully cross if she knows I'm smoking."

"Pshaw! your mother! you don't mean to say that you care for what your mother says?" laughed Jack's new counsellor.

Jack felt it necessary again to apologise for having had some respect for his mother, by muttering something about "not wishing to have any rows in the house."

"Of course—of course," said his companion; "it's just as well to humour the old ladies as far as you conveniently can; but I would never give up any rational enjoyments to suit their foolish fancies."

Just then, poor Jack, who all this time had been pulling very hard at this his first cigar, began to feel as if he would do anything and everything in the world to rid himself of one of these said "rational enjoyments." In short, he was getting qualmish.

"In fact," continued the Oracle, "they're all very well for managing the girls, but they don't understand us fellows, you know."

Jack made a silent acquiescence. He felt dizzy and sick.

The Oracle found that he would have to become the main prop of the conversation. He was nothing loth. He was a willing Oracle.

After some "knowing" remarks on things in general, he asked, "Been to the Royal —?" naming a West End theatre.

A mournful shake of the head was the only reply.

"Been to any theatre?"

Another shake.

The Oracle grinned, and coughed out some of the smoke which had gone into his throat. "Come, that's a good one! Not been to a theatre! But I suppose your *mummy* wouldn't let you. Ha! ha!"

Here a gleam of hope lit up the face of our sufferer, as he observed that his cigar was about half burnt. He knew he might now throw it away. Accordingly he did so. That was a relief, but the queer feeling did not likewise vanish.

"Good cigar, eh?" remarked the other.

"Capital, capital!" exclaimed Jack, forcing the ghost of a smile to his countenance. He could not contain his agony much longer: he must go. "Good-bye," said he, "I'd better run home now, or I shall be late for dinner."

"Good-bye," answered the Oracle; "but you must come with me to-night to the Royal——; there is a splendid play to be performed."

"But—but," stammered poor Jack, "I don't think my——" he was going to say "mother," but he stopped short, dreading the sarcasm of his Oracle.

"Mammy again, I do believe," said that gentleman. "Come, I thought you were above that sort of thing. Do be a man, and meet me at Charing Cross at half-past five. Till then, good-bye."

Jack staggered rather than walked home; and, arrived there, he had to forgo his dinner and lie down. How miserable, as well as ill, did he feel! In an hour's time he would have to fulfil his reluctant promise, and present himself at Charing Cross. And not only that, but he would have to grieve his mother still more than he had already done in beginning, boy as he was, after all, to smoke. His mother had not long been a widow, and he was her only child. She had none to look to but him, save, indeed, that Friend who is a God to the widow, and would be a Father to the fatherless. And that son, who should have been a comfort to her in her sorrow, was becoming the source of still greater trouble.

The time came, and Jack issued from his room, looking pale and miserable. Fearing to tell his mother where he was going, he quietly slipped out, leaving word with old James that he would be home rather late. He found his companion at Charing Cross, and they at once set off to the theatre.

Bewildered by the gorgeous appearance of the show, and the novelty of the scene, Jack for a time forgot his qualms, both mental and bodily, and was in an ecstasy of wonder and delight. His admiration of the cleverness of the "hero" of the piece was unbounded—indeed, he thought it would be a very fine thing for him if he was such a clever fellow, and could perform such deeds of daring; although, to be sure, some of his actions were somewhat unprincipled.

The performance over, he was starting off home, when the Oracle said he must insist on having his company with him to supper at the "Lion Tavern." After making a feeble excuse, Jack yielded; and excited as he was by the unwonted and unhealthy scenes he had just witnessed, he drank as often as his companion chose, and soon unwittingly became helpless and intoxicated. The Oracle called this "seeing life!" As soon as he perceived his victim's condition, he called a cab, and tumbling Jack into it head over heels, ordered him to be driven home!

I cannot attempt to describe the distress and anguish of his mother, as her unhappy son was dragged out of the cab and carried up-stairs. I know that all that night she watched at her son's bedside, and prayed to God that he would change the heart of the child who was still so dear to her.

In the morning she bent over him as he woke; but he made no sign of recognition, and cried out for "water, water!" Alarmed, she sent for a doctor, who, as soon as he came, said, "He is in a fever."

Yes; the reward of disobedience and guilty pleasure had quickly come. The illness, though sharp, was not a protracted one; and while he was regaining his strength, poor Jack had ample time in which to review the past. He saw that instead of being a "man," he had been making a fool of himself; he had worshipped and copied the *weaknesses* of manhood; and in aping manliness he had become as *unmanly* as possible. He blushed at the thought of how ridiculous he must have appeared in the eyes of sensible people; he resolved to be himself once more, and cut the acquaintance of the "set." "With God's help," said he, "I mean in future to be a dutiful son to my mother, and not listen to the senseless sneers of Bounce and Buck. After all, my dear mother is the best friend I have in the world."

Jack—he doesn't mind being called Jack now—is able occasionally to take a short walk, and just now I met him in the street, when he told me all I have been telling you. His face was no longer screwed round an eye-glass, and his "cane" had given place to a stout blackthorn, which for the time he needed.

"Ah, Harry, lad!" said he, "I have thrown aside that miserable switch with the rest of the senseless fopperies of which I used to be so fond. Trouble soon proves the worthlessness of such things."

"My dear Jack," I exclaimed, "you are more of a man now than ever you were."

Boys, have I any need to gather for you the moral of this little anecdote? It is: Do not attempt to be men before your time. "Growing up" is a process not to be hurried. If "time and tide wait for no man," neither for him will they increase their pace. The root of this ambition is conceit; but bear this in mind, that the more you assume to yourself, the less you will be thought of by those whose good opinion is worth having.

Manhood can never be attained at the expense of boyhood. The one should glide naturally into the other. Remember, too, that there is the growth of the mind. This, to a great extent, depends upon yourself. Your mental faculties are talents with which the Great Master has entrusted you. Do not neglect them. These faculties require cultivation and exercise that they may be properly matured. Now is the time for it. There is the growth of the soul: woe to you if you neglect it! It is yours to prepare for eternity; the soul must "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." Now is the time for THAT.

49.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC ON PAGE 64.

"Abana."—2 Kings v. 12.

1. A thaliah 2 Kings xi. 3.
2. B ethabara John i. 28.
3. A nna Luke ii. 36—37.
4. N ebo Deut. xxxiv. 1—5.
5. A holah Ezek. xxxiii. iv.